

PLANNING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 23, 2004 - 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL ANNEX - COMMUNITY ROOM 2

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Sherrard, Roper, Steinfeld, Pritchard, Alternate Kane and Sullo

Absent: Gibson

Staff: Murphy, Moulding

Kane arrived at 7:08 p.m. and will sit for Gibson.

Sherrard congratulated Pritchard on becoming a permanent member of the Commission and introduced Mike Sullo and Raymond Munn as newly appointed members.

II. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Town Council Referral under CGS 8-24 regarding abandonment of a portion of Cedar Lane in Noank

Staff stated that this is located near Cedar lane in Noank close to the fire station. Attorney Kepple represents the Sdaos who felt there was a cloud on the title to their property. The issue is one of the Town giving up its interest in this small portion of land. This would create a more conforming front yard for the Sdaos parcel, which is non-conforming. This piece is unnecessary to the Town and the Noank Fire District does not have any interest in the piece of land, to the best of our knowledge. This portion is also not needed as part of the cul-de-sac.

Attorney Kepple displayed a map of the area and explained where the piece of property is located. He stated the fence has existed since 1988. The legal description of the property in a 1908 conveyance to the fire district was not described very well. On February 10, 2004 he went before the Noank Fire District which authorized release of any quick claim they may have to it. The addition of this portion of land will in no way allow the Sdaos to subdivide their property. Attorney Kepple believes the Sdaos have been paying the property taxes on this piece of property.

MOTION: To send a favorable report to the Town Council regarding referral 2004-0025, the abandonment of a 727 Square foot portion of Cedar Lane.

Motion made by Sherrard, seconded by Roper, so voted unanimously.

2. Town Council Referral under CGS 8-24 regarding Referenda for Renovations and/or Demolitions, and Additions to School Facilities

Staff provided the Commission with copies of the referrals. Mark Oefinger, Town Manager stated that there are three referrals but there will be four questions on the ballot because one question is related to a location and not a dollar amount. The new northeast school at the Freeman Hathaway site is exactly what the Commission looked at before. The components of Phase I for Fitch High School have been changed and the cost lowered. The third question is regarding the Eastern Point School. This is referred to the Planning Commission for a site location assessment. Staff reviewed information

in the Plan of Conservation and Development regarding school facility needs. Oefinger gave details on the King property as well as the Eastern Point property. Both building would be 74,000 S.F. and hold 450 students. There would probably be turning lanes on Poquonnock Road for buses if the King property were chosen. Groton Heights and Colonel Ledyard students would attend the school on the King property. Eastern point students would eventually go to the West Side site. The bulk of students now walk to eastern point. Ted See, the Towns bond attorney determined that this is a Town issue and should be referred to the Town Planning Commission. There will be environmental assessments done on both properties.

Staff noted that both sites are in mixed-use nodes. The Plan of Conservation and Development recommends looking at sites for the future facility needs of the Town. The King property was on the land use plan as multi-family but is also an opportunity area that could accommodate other uses. The entire site is not shown as a site for open space protection. The City's Plan of Conservation and Development includes policies regarding schools and suggests that the widest range of educational facilities should be assured and that they should be located so as to be easily accessible to all residents of all ages and incomes.

Steinford and Kane feel the King property would be a better location for the new Eastern Point School because there would be room for expansion if needed in the future. Roper does not like the idea of busing more students and would prefer giving the voters the choice of locations. Oefinger stated that April 27, 2004 is the current referendum date.

Item a)

Sherrard introduced the following resolution, which was seconded by Roper.

RESOLVED, that the Planning Commission of the Town of Groton approves the following project pursuant to Section 8-24 of the General Statutes of Connecticut:

- Fitch High School Additions and Renovations – Phase I – to be located on the existing high school site off Groton Long Point Road in the southern part of Groton. The Phase I project will include design and construction of additions of approximately 119,000 square feet, renovations of approximately 40,000 square feet of the existing facility and demolition of approximately 50,000 square feet of the existing facility. The additions and renovations will include approximately twenty four classrooms for grades nine through twelve, science classrooms/laboratories, art studios, technology and vocational education classrooms, language classrooms, special education classrooms, cafeteria and support spaces, and spaces and facilities for administration, support services and storage, parking and access drives as well as temporary classrooms and support spaces, land or easement acquisition, necessary utilities, parking, road and sidewalk improvements to and on the school site, site improvements and portable classrooms. The Town Council, or its designee, shall approve the final concept for the school project.

The resolution was approved by 5 votes in favor and 0 votes opposed.

Item b)

Sherrard introduced the following resolution, which was seconded by Steinford.

RESOLVED, that the Planning Commission of the Town of Groton approves the following project pursuant to Section 8-24 of the General Statutes of Connecticut:

- New Elementary School, East Side – to be located on the existing Freeman-Hathaway property off Oslo Street in the northeastern part of Groton. The project will include demolition of the former school building, design and construction of an approximately 74,000 square foot new elementary school which will include eighteen classrooms for grades kindergarten through five, a pre-kindergarten classroom, a science classroom, art classroom, music classroom, special education spaces, resource room, media center, gymnasium, cafeteria/multi-purpose room, kitchen, spaces and facilities for administration, support services and storage, recreational fields, parking and access drives, land or easement acquisition, necessary utilities, parking, road and sidewalk improvements to and on the school site, site improvements and portable classrooms. The Town Council, or its designee, shall approve the final concept for the school project.

The resolution was approved by 5 votes in favor and 0 votes opposed.

Item c)

Sherrard introduced the following resolution, which was seconded by Pritchard:

RESOLVED, that the Planning Commission of the Town of Groton approves the following project pursuant to Section 8-24 of the General Statutes of Connecticut:

- New Elementary School – to be located on either (a) the existing Eastern Point Elementary School property off Shennecosset Road in the southwestern part of Groton, or (b) a portion of Town-owned property, the so called King property, off Poquonock Road in the southwestern part of Groton. The project will include design and construction of an approximately 74,000 square foot new elementary school which will include approximately eighteen classrooms for grades kindergarten through five, a pre-kindergarten classroom, a science classroom, art classroom, music classroom, special education spaces, resource room, media center, gymnasium, cafeteria/multi-purpose room, kitchen, spaces and facilities for administration, support services and storage, recreational fields, parking and access drives, as well as any necessary demolition of existing school facilities, off site wetland mitigation and temporary classroom and school spaces, land or easement acquisition, necessary utilities, parking, road and sidewalk improvements to and on the school site, site improvements and portable classrooms. The Town Council, or its designee, shall approve the final concept for the school project, subject to the determination by the voters of the Town of the project site at referendum.

The resolution was approved by 4 votes in favor and 1 vote opposed (Kane).

3. Capital Improvement Program – Review and Recommendations

Mark Oefinger, Town Manager stated that the document distributed is a draft. Some projects will have to be reduced or eliminated in the next year because budgeted amounts do not equal the total in the Capital Reserve Fund. The amount spent on vehicles has been included in the Capital Reserve Fund in the past and Oefinger does not believe it belongs in the CIP. He feels projects for education need to be addressed by school facility. Oefinger reviewed each of the following Capital Projects for 2005:

Roads

Pavement Management Program Implementation
Route 1/Claude Chester/Vergennes Court
Retaining Wall Replacement, Military Highway

Sidewalks

New Sidewalk Construction – Rt. 184/Rt 12/Kings Hwy

Parks and Recreation

Esker Point Beach Improvement Program
Trail Improvement Program
Park Improvement Plan
Open Space Acquisition and Development
Sutton Park Improvement Project

Education

Fitch High School
Claude Chester
Eastern Point
Mary Morrison
Noank
Pleasant Valley

Gary Schneider covered the following Public Buildings and Water Pollution Control Facilities:

Fire Alarm/Sprinkler Installation Various Buildings
Senior Center/Library
Police Station
Human Services Building Repairs/Renovations
Town Hall
Police Station – Air Filtration

Water Pollution Control Facility

WPCF Sewer Line Infrastructure Repairs
Mechanical/Electrical Equipment Replacement WPCF
Facility Repairs – WPCF
Roof Replacements – WPCF

Oefinger concluded with the following miscellaneous categories:

Economic Assistance Fund
Information Technology Acquisition
Information Technology Recovery Planning
Mobile Data Terminals for Police, Fire & EMS
Radio Base Station Replacement
Homeland Security Renovations

Sherrard asked that the Route 117, bike path be included under 4C. Also, the consensus of the Commission was that the sidewalks near the Route 1 sidewalks near the

interchange with I95 and Route 184 are very important. Roper would like to see the sidewalk extended on Drozdyk Drive and is in favor of some money in the Economic Assistance Fund. The Commission would like to schedule a special meeting for Thursday, March 4th at 7:00 p.m., to complete the CIP review and commentary.

III. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 10:08 p.m. made by Roper, seconded by Steinford, so voted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Margil Steinford